HEIDEGGER'S DISCOURSE ON HERACLITUS'S CONCEPTS OF

ALETHEIA AND *LOGOS.*

by

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Heidegger's Discourse on Heraclitus's Concepts of *Aletheia* and *Logos*.

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ABSTRACT

This paper maintains that the work of Heidegger on Heraclitus' fragments 50 on *logos* and 16 on *aletheia*, represent a viable alternative to the "Metaphysics" of Occident Thinking in the early 20th century, which has culminated in the mindset of the our technological age. It further explores an alternative aspiration for language and methodology that is able to serve as a viable alternative for the exploration of Heraclitus' texts, given their fragmentary format and obscure nature. The effort maintains that the disclosedness of *aletheia* as truth is an alternative perspective to the mainstay of considering the truth-value of language solely in the correlation between the idea and the concept. Furthermore an understanding of *logos* broadens the subjective experience of language beyond the correlation between the word and the idea, to a more fundamental experience of being found in inter-subjectivity and universality.

This abstract accurately represents the content of the candidate's thesis. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Robert Metcalf

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved daughter Uta, for always reminding me that all can be found in the one before us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER 1

A CALL TO WONDER

The effort of this thesis is to revive and direct ourselves toward the

discourse that the 20th century German philosopher Martin Heidegger had with

the Pre-Socratics and particularly the ancient Greek Heraclitus (approx. 535-475

BCE), both because the details of this discourse go largely unstudied, and because

it once offered a viable alternative to our current understanding of truth and

ourselves.

Heidegger's work on the Presocratics is underscored with a call to

question the "rubrics" of our modern understanding in relation to an alternative

that the Presocratics such as Heraclitus once made available. Heidegger states

"we must ask whether what is entertained under the rubrics 'truth,' 'certainty,'

'objectivity,' and 'reality' has the slightest bearing upon the direction in which

revealing and lighting point thought" (*Early Greek Thinking 103).* For

Heidegger, the alternative has more to tell us than what was made available by the

securing of propositions, which is the business of "objective truth" (ibid, 103).

Our efforts to know, in the sense of securing propositions, have become a

hindrance to the very experience of questioning itself. He tells us that "to feel at

home in a questioning…" requires that we have "the ability to wonder at what is

simple, and to take up that wonder as our abode" (*Early Greek Thinking,* 104).

What is at stake in the return to questioning is the leverage we are to

provide to our current "objective thinking" and its ability to provide us with an interpretation of early Greek philosophy. We have to consider the role "objective thinking" has played in understanding ancient thought, and furthermore the experience of life as a determiner of ancient thinking. For now, we will take "objective truth" to mean the securing of a proposition on a matter; i.e., accepting as valid one's statement on a matter. "Objective thinking" is the process therein of doing so.

In considering an alternative to "objective thinking" we have to understand that early Greek thought didn't hold the same primacy toward being objective as the modern mindset does. In addressing the ancient everyday experience of being we are faced with the challenge that our primary tool for understanding—i.e. "objective thinking"—fails to account for the actuality of the ancient experience of being. The failure of "objective thinking" to account for the ancient experience of being will be outlined as we continue the exploration of being for the Greeks. It suffices to say at this point, the ancient alternative of necessarily standing in relation to the question of being has more to tell us about our own being than the answers provided to us by our current mode of "objective thinking." By standing in direct relation to the question of being, the ancients produced an authentic understanding of the very nature of being. What they came to understand was that the importance of standing in relation to the unanswerable question of being underscores the very process of being.

William Richardson's essay "ʼΑΛΉΘΕΙΑ," on Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus fragment 16, relates that "it is by a question that we best express the primal wonderment that most characterizes authentic thought" (488). A full exegesis of Heraclitus's fragment 16 will be saved for my final chapter "Aletheia." I am here wanting to bring attention to Richardson's note of Heidegger's vision of the ancient Greeks, especially Heraclitus, as mediators between man and being, and how they were assigned the task of differentiating being from truth (486). Richardson draws attention to Heidegger's claim "that it is the self-retracting, self-retaining character of Being that is the original meaning of reticence (awe)" (485). The retraction of truth toward the unanswerable is able to reveal our role in the schema of Being.

To begin to understand the Presocratics we must step into the state of awe that sparked their thinking and ask what fundamental condition of their lives produced such responses. We have to consider whether the Presocratics responded to these conditions in the form of solely giving their opinions on the subject of life as such, or whether they observed a more fundamental observation regarding the state of being.

Heidegger's readings of the Presocratics serve as a viable alternative to the objective truth model of the modern era and provide us with a way of understanding Greek thinking that stretches beyond the focus of scholarly opinions.   Heidegger says that "wishing to pursue that 'objectively correct'

teaching of Heraclitus means refusing to run the salutary risk of being confounded by the truth of a thinking" (*Early Greek Thinking,* 106). Furthermore modernity has maintained a predominant focus upon the self to the exclusion of the possibility of other thinking. Gadamar states that the focus of modernity has become the preoccupation with thinking "through again and again the central philosophical problem of self-consciousness" (*Heraclitus Studies*, 204). We gather at this initial stage in our approach to Heidegger's insight on Heraclitus that we must take the risk of being confounded by the underlying truth of thinking and avoid the tradition of exclusively focusing on the problem of self-consciousness.

What we are here approaching is a universal notion of Being that stretches beyond the variations of philosophy that have focused on self-consciousness throughout history. Heidegger's quotation in the first subsection of chapter one of *Being and Time*, on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* III, 4 1001a 21, states, "'Being' is the most 'universal' concept" (*Basic Writings*, 42). This universality spurs us toward an understanding of our lives outside of the possibility of doubt. In saying that "Being is the most universal concept," Heidegger reminds us that we "cannot mean that it is the clearest and that it needs no further discussion" (*Basic Writings*, 43). For Heidegger "the concept of 'Being'" remained "the most obscure of all" (ibid).

Charles E. Scott, in his essay "Appearing to Remember Heraclitus", notes that, "'Greece' appears, in our experiences and in our approaches to it, multiplied, displaced and transferred, diluted and transformed" (250). He further states "we never know 'Greece' and are always dealing with "the being of 'Greece'" which "comes to us and is lost to us in the appearances of our Greek heritage" (ibid). Yet the loss of an original understanding of "Greece" may still yield a lesson in the value of the universality of Greece.

In our undertaking here, in our study of Heidegger's exegesis of Heraclitus, Scott reminds us that another sense of "Greece" arises in which "we know that we belong to 'Greece' in knowing that its being is lost in its appearance" (ibid). The true "Greece" is always feeding into our biases, and previous biases are feeding into our biases, and yet to understand fully the original thinking of the Greeks we have only to embrace how it is always at a distance from us. As the notion of "Greece" is lost in the processing of what it meant, the truth of "Greece" is once again obtained in the understanding of how functionally truth is always lost in history.

Understanding "Greek thinking" entails a certain removal of our self-consciousness into a foundation of truth in Greek philosophy. A wonderful essay of Hans-Georg Gadamer's "Heraclitus Studies" speaks on the lack of self-consciousness within the early Greeks. Gadamer states, "if something can truly come to the aid of our modern concern with the riddle of self-consciousness, it is

the fact that the Greeks had in their possession neither an expression for the subject or subjectivity nor an expression for consciousness and the concept of the I" (205). The focus on self-consciousness so prevalent in our modern times, and so insignificant to the Greeks goes hand in hand with a modern primacy toward valuing and maintaining an awareness of the self as a foundation of certainty in the world.

To be objective is to know, in the scientific sense, the facts of your world, to have absolute certainty in the fundamental workings of the world around you, through the propositions that you have secured. Gadamer tells us that "the primacy of self-consciousness can hold only if one attributes an absolute priority to the ideal of certainty, or better still, to the ideal of a methodological confirmation of the validity and reality of mathematical construction" (205). We must further underscore the obvious that certainty necessarily requires us to the exclude all doubt, and that it makes no available space for the unknown.

Alternatively, Heidegger discloses an understanding of the Greeks that is viable in its being truly unknowable. His works on Heraclitus address the character of Heraclitus, as he is truly unknowable, and posit a respect for the unknown as a key element of understanding his work as it is. In Heidegger's discussion of Nothing, which follows in the section "Aletheia" of this paper, we will see how his respect for the unknowable and a configuration of our philosophy

away from the all inclusive perspective of modernity, become the key elements to living in relation to truth.

Our everyday experience of Greek history and thinking, if considered honestly, illustrates a different picture than the certainty we find in modern thinking on the matter. To understand our being as it is laid over and against our experience we will next move to Heidegger's sense of authentic history. Authentic history need not follow the linear trajectory of a historic timeline.

CHAPTER 2

AUTHENTIC HISTORY

Anwesen

In considering Heidegger's sense of history we must first focus our

inquiry on Heidegger's understanding of the Greeks' experience of Being as

Anwesen (presence). We seek the critical difference between the Greek notions of

Being as understood in the *Anwesen des Anwesenden* or the presence of the

present, and what followed and changed the authentic experience of Being, *the*

Aussehen. George J. Seidel's study, <u>Martin Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics</u>,

discusses Heidegger's philosophy of history in terms of the differences between

Anwesen and *Aussehen*. First, we will consider the light Heidegger brings to the

Anwesen, which maintains a lingering relationship to unconcealment, to the

mystery as such.

According to Heidegger, our initial Dasein is projected into a great

Nothing, as was the case for the early Greek thinkers. For Heidegger, 'Dasein'

accounts for "that kind of existence that is always involved in an understanding of

its Being," and it "has been widely used in German philosophy to mean the

'existence' (or *Dass-sein* "that it is"), as opposed to the 'essence' (or *was-sein*,

"what it is") of a thing, state of affairs, person or God" (note from *Basic Writings,*

48). Heidegger utilized the hyphenated form *Da-sein* in chapter five of <u>Being and</u>

<u>Time</u>, which suggested, "there being" (ibid). Simply the term accounts for our

everyday experience of being there in the world. Accepting our every day

experience of being in the world means that we are always standing in relation,

not to certainty, but to a vastness of unintelligibility.

In <u>Being and Time</u> Heidegger establishes the fundamental source of

knowledge itself. The occidental man of the early 20th century tended to describe

himself as a rational animal in that he thought and had knowledge through the

rational (Krell, *Basic Writings*, 90). According to Heidegger, the source of the

rational always lies unaccounted for, and he understands it to be in the

"disclosedness (Erschlossenheit) of Dasein as being-in-the-world (ibid).

For Heidegger it is our moods—joy, boredom, excitement, and anxiety—

in which Dasein discloses itself (ibid). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger states, the

"manner of access and interpretation must instead be chosen in such a way that

this being can show itself to itself on its own terms" (*Basic Writings*, 59).   He

also states "furthermore, this manner should show that being as it is *at first and*

for the most part—in its average *everydayness*" (*Basic Writings*, 59). The terms

that Being utilizes to show itself to itself occurs through the everyday average

state we find ourselves in, the simple moods of our lives are the terms with which

Being is able to show itself.

However, the mood of anxiety stood out for Heidegger as an essential

structure in its ability to disclose the essence of our Dasein. Heidegger

understood anxiety, not in its common meaning of feeling worry, but what David

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Kreel explains as a more involved understanding of anxiety, that accounts for the fact that "I have been 'thrown' into the world and that my life and death—my Being as such—is an issue I must face" (*Basic Writings*, 90). We experience the "thrownness" in our everyday lives in that we find ourselves in a world of situations beyond our control. For example, we don't decide where we are born, our parentage, or the accidental happenings that occur in the world around us.

In considering our "thrownness into death" we realize that the rationale for our everyday lives is constructed upon a foundation that habitually ignores the possibility of its own imminent extinction. In this regard the rational behind our modern endeavors is unauthentic. Authentic endeavors would have us consider the everyday exposition of our own ends and the frailty of our lives.

Furthermore in <u>Being and Time</u>, Heidegger explains, "Dasein finds itself *face to face* with the nothing of the possible impossibility of its own existence" (Section 53). In conventional speech when we say "nothing in particular makes me anxious," we are touching on an anxiety that is in the face of nothing, an anxiety that "unveils the nullity that determines Dasein in its *ground*—which is its being thrown into death" (*Being and Time*, section 62). Nothing in this regard is a tangible fact about the status of our everyday life coming to an unknown end.

In the essay "What is metaphysics?" Heidegger considers how "metaphysics," thus far correlative to what we have been calling "rational," is an "interpretation of beings and forgetfulness of Being and that means neglect of the

essence of the Nihil (nothing)" (Krell 91).   Heidegger follows Nietzsche's account of "the history of metaphysics as nihilism" in its abandonment of accounting for nothing as a "source of man and being"(ibid). Ironically Nihilism, in the history of Metaphysics, occurs as a result of ignoring nothing rather than making it a preoccupation for Being.

In Being and Time, Heidegger made the case that Greek ontology became "a fixed doctrine" in the Middle Ages, and that earlier insights came to be the "conceptual character" of the modern ages' "metaphysics"(66). Heidegger cites the history of neglect regarding the question of Being in the maintaining of a predominance of problems such as Descartes' *ego cogito* argument (66). Heidegger finds Descartes' *cogito sum* argument from the *Meditations* problematic in that it failed to account for the "meaning of the Being" behind the certainty that was subsequently attained in Descartes' thought experiment. Descartes had claimed "to prepare a new and secure foundation for philosophy" and yet he failed to account for the most essential component of his newfangled construction—i.e., "the manner of being of the *res cogitans*, more precisely, *the meaning of the Being of the 'sum'* (68).

Heidegger uses the problem of the rigidity of the "conceptual character of philosophy today" in order to illustrate "the fact that Dasein understands itself and Being in general in terms of the 'world'" (65). Gadamer is most useful here when he brings up Nietzsche's response to Descartes' meditation in saying that "a more

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fundamental doubt is needed" (*Heraclitus Studies*, 204). In this sense history regarding Greek ontology from the Middle Ages forward has been only a reworking of the obvious and not a divulgence of the actual history surrounding the question of Being for Being.

<div align="center">

Destruktion

</div>

Heidegger achieves clarity for the question Being via a "loosening of the sclerotic tradition" that is expressed as the Middle Age's misdirection in responding to Greek ontology, the antecedent to modern "metaphysics."

In <u>Being and Time</u>, Heidegger makes explicit that "if the question of Being is to achieve clarity regarding its own history, a loosening of the sclerotic tradition and a dissolving of the concealments produced by it are necessary" (*Basic Writings,* 66).   This task is noted as a "*destructuring* of the traditional content of the ancient ontology," with the term "destructuring" here derived from Heidegger's use of the word *Destruktion*, or the German *Zersörung.* The term *Destruktion* is used without negative connotation in a neutral and constructive sense (Krell's note in *Basic Writings,* 63).

The destructuring of the traditions regarding the question of Being is done via a recapitulation of the "original experiences in which the first and subsequently guiding determinations of being were gained" (66). However total

abandonment of the history of ontology isn't called for, as Heidegger puts it "the destructuring does not wish to bury the past in nullity" (67). What must be reconsidered are the points in which the history of ontology "thematically connected itself to the phenomenon of time" (67).

Heidegger posits the question of Being within the guideline of temporality. He reminds us that the "ancient interpretation of the Being of beings is oriented toward the 'world' or 'nature' in the broadest sense and that it indeed gains its understanding of Being from 'time' (*Being and Time*, Basic Writings, 69). Furthermore the "outward evidence" of this lies in the "determination of the meaning of Being as *parousia* or *ousia*, which means ontologically and temporally "presence" ["Anwesenheit"]" (ibid). Put simply, Being is understood in relation to a specific mode of time—i.e., the present.

Having Being encompass its own temporality lies in stark contrast to the Cartesian model, which assumed Being in the medieval tradition of a divine creation from an infinite God. As Heidegger states of the medieval tradition, "the *ens infinitum God* is the *ens increatum*" (69). What this tells us is that, unlike the Cartesian model, Greek ontology derived its essential character from its own present.

Aussehen

Returning now to our earlier discussion at the opening of this section, we will explore the alternative notion to *Anwesen*, that of the *Aussehen, "*look" [The Greek ἐιδος]. George Siedel's study discusses *Aussehen,* the Platonic ideal of history, as it proceeds into the present understanding of history and takes its antecedent from the initial equating of Being solely with the idea or abstraction. The Greek ἐιδος, or the idea in its common translation, arises as an imposition upon Being's initial relation to the unconcealed. This imposition upon the mystery becomes calcified not in relation to the mystery itself but to an external construct. The calcification of the concept to the idea then leads to a mode of determination that is based on the values of finitude, determination, and correctness.

The creation of the construct, which was an afterthought in the face of the initial lack of being relatable to the mystery, comes to dominate our understanding via the comfortable terms of equivocating the concept to the idea. The subsequent terms are thus distanced from the lack of initial clarity. After such an equivocation is posited within our attempts to understand, our understanding itself becomes solely the relation between the abstractions and our original experience with the unknown is forgotten in the process.

Dennis J Schmidt's article, "What We Didn't See," notes Nietzsche's capitulation that "philosophical reflections on Justice" since the time of Plato have born a resemblance to the shopkeeper's scale in that "justice is thought under the sign of the concept, it takes the form of a calculus, an economy of exchanges" (155). Here the understanding of "the good" becomes the model for which justice is measured, which in turn overrides any possibility of justice outside the workings of this equivocation. Nietzsche's discussion of justice and the good in terms of an economy of exchange is similar to Heidegger's notion of the binding construct of our modern metaphysics, which come about as a result of ignoring the initial question of Being. Efforts to place the abstract experiences of our lives under the constraints of definition and communication have yielded little clarity to the inherent mystery behind our understanding. Like good tragedy we must first find ourselves in the face of something that is truly irreconcilable before we can begin to exist authentically.

Charles E. Scott, in his essay "Appearing to Remember Heraclitus," notes how Nietzsche's account of the sublime dimension of Dionysian memory is "not based on literal truth or accuracy" but "an occurrence in which 'something' excessive to identity and individuation is manifest and in which the individual experiences loss of autonomy and control" (251). The sublime is noted as an experience in which "standing out from oneself—ec-stasis—occurs in an event of disjoining and falling apart." Scott notes this lack of self within the structure of

the ecstatic experience in further relation to Nietzsche's telling of the selfless

structure as it is found in Greek Tragedy.

In regard to the ecstatic loss of self-identity, it is Scott understanding that

Heidegger's exegesis of Heraclitus is in the vein of Nietzsche's insights from the

Birth of Tragedy. Scott states "the self-concealing of Φύσις as Φύσις (*ousia)*

presents itself in the coming to pass of thought: Φύσις, which names the coming

to presence of things, conceals itself in the self-presentation, and Heraclitus'

thought remembers in its own occurrence the intimacy of self-revealing and self-

concealing" (253). Rather oddly "the 'dimension' of appearing that conceals

(itself) and does not appear happens as not appearing" (254). Scott further recalls

how plainly "concealing occurs in excess to appearing" (254). Heidegger stated

in Early Greek Thinking, "What takes place in such indifference comes from the

Wesen (the essence, the coming to pass) of oblivion itself. It is inherent in it to

withdraw itself and to founder in the wake of its own concealment" (EGT 108,

qtd. in Scott 255).

Charles Schmidt argues that Heidegger's "reading of early Greek texts

generally is best interpreted as an effort to formulate the contours of a non-

metaphysical sense of ethical life." According to Schmidt the general effort "is a

creative and philosophically imaginative confrontation with these texts, and is not,

in the first instance, an effort to remedy inappropriate scholarship on the part of

the classicists" (*What We Didn't See*, 167). Schmidt concludes by quoting

Heidegger's, *Holzwege,* in saying that "once thinking begins to poetize with respect to the riddle of Being, it brings what is to be thought into nearness with the earliest of what has been thought'" (*What We Didn't See*, 167).

As we come nearer to what has been thought we are in a good position to outline a more authentic methodology for the process of interpreting an ancient text. In the next section I will work through the methodology of Hermeneutics by directing the discussion toward the underpinnings of interpretation itself. In understanding authentic history we had to include a focus on the framework that determined the basis for what is considered historic, so too in the Hermeneutic discussion will need to focus on the individual and his/her experience of a text as the source behind any interpretation.

Hermeneutik

Heidegger's methodology in regard to historical exegesis is based on the *Hermeneutik,* or "the science which treats of the purposes, ways, and rules for the interpretation of literary works" (Seidel 7). In the specific case of Being and Time, it is "the attempt to think down to the roots of phenomenology itself, the attempt to determine the essence of interpretation itself from out of an exegesis of *Dasein,* the 'interpreter'" (ibid). The most notable aspect of the methodology of the Hermeneutic is the primacy given to the perspective of the interpreter. Where

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most every form of interpretation will seek to exclude the interpreter from the task of understanding with the hope of being objective, the Hermeneutic approach will operate from the initial assumption that any observation can never exclude the interpreter. Further still the Hermeneutic approach makes it a primary focus and matter of practice to utilize the position of the individual as a starting point for engaging a text.

CHAPTER 3

DASEIN AND TEMPORALITY

We must here consider fully the experience of the interpreter, the notion of Dasein. In the spirit of Heidegger's' methodology, we can begin to deal with the real experience of a Greek thinker only when we have grounded our studies in the central question of Being. We have to first admit that in asking, "What is Greek thinking?," as inquirers, we are not entirely free of the Greek understanding we ask about. On first consideration we seem to have arrived at Greek thinking independently of its historical present.

However, to a certain extent our ability to ask reflectively what Greek understanding looked like is only a possibility provided for us by the antecedent of that thinking. The antecedent is always before us when we withdraw from the modern distractions on the question of Being. Heidegger relates that "an ontic possibility of Dasein" is always available when research comes into the "sphere of the central question of Being" (*Being and Time,* Basic Writings, 63). If we are to inquire as to how to relate to ancient thinking as it was in its everyday processes then we have to understand that it addressed "the central question of Being" in its everydayness. Furthermore, that the ability to once again bring ourselves toward "the central question of Being" is always available to us if we stand in relation to it via our present effort.

In realizing the effect of the past on our current understanding we cannot assume that we are free of its influence. We have to qualify our current understanding by the realization that the past is always already there for the present. In <u>Being and Time</u>, Heidegger relates how historical inquiry is fundamentally determined by Dasein's determination of the historicity of Being (Basic Writings, 64). Specifically, he says that "in its factual Being (Dasein) possesses what is past as a property that is still at hand and occasionally has an effect on it" (*Being and Time,* Basic Writings, 63). In this sense Dasein is always creating its future based on "a customary interpretation of itself" within which it has grown up (*Being and Time,* Basic Writings, 63). Furthermore, "this understanding discloses the possibilities of its Being and regulates them" (*Being and Time,* Basic Writings, 63). Therefore, Dasein is always understood by a past that is always projecting ahead and determining it in its future character. There is however, the possibility that the mechanics of Dasein's past, being always ahead of it, will go unnoticed.

Returning to the focus on Greek Ontology, Heidegger tells us that "Greek ontology and its history, which through many twist and turns still determines the conceptual character of philosophy today, are proof of the fact that Dasein understands itself and being in general in terms of the "world" (65). The character of the philosophical inquiry that we have today is a product of the Greeks.

In the next section we will consider how to access a language that will bring Being to the present. By recognizing the role of Dasein's understanding itself in terms of the world, we are able to make extensions toward a utility of language that is more sufficient for the task. In our understanding that Being was once able to work through the world in a vastly different way than that in which we have become comfortable, we can begin to understand how in turn our language has been limited in its modern inability to disclose Being.

CHAPTER 4

HEIDEGGER'S PORTRAYAL OF LOGOS
(HERACLITUS FRAGMENT B 50)

> To look at something is such a wonderful thing of which
> we still know so little. When we look at something, we are turned
> completely toward the outside by this activity. But just when we
> are most turned toward the outside like that, things seem to take
> place within us that have longed for an unobserved moment, and
> while they unfold within us, whole and strangely anonymous,
> *without us,* their significance begins to take shape in the external
> object in the form of a strong, convincing indeed their only
> possible name. And by means of this name we contentedly and
> respectfully recognize what is happening inside us without
> ourselves touching upon it. We understand it only quietly, entirely
> from a distance, under the sign of a thing that had just been alien
> and in the next instant is alienated from us again.
> <div align="right">(Rilke, Letters on Life, 9).</div>

Heidegger's treatment of Logos in Heraclitus' fragment B 50 from <u>Early Greek Thinking </u>underscores our self-anesthetizing to the genuine problem of thinking and its relation to Being. The G.S. Kirk and J.S. Raven translation of fragment B 50 reads:

> Listening not to me but to the Logos it is wise to agree that all
> things are one.
> <div align="center">(187).</div>

Heidegger sees this fragment as an alternative direction for western thinking. Although unnoticed by subsequent philosophy after Heraclitus, there was once an alternative worldview available to the early Greeks.   Rather

poetically, Heidegger underscores that "once, however in the beginning of Western thinking, the essence of language flashed in the light of Being—once, when Heraclitus thought the λόγος as his guiding word, so as to think in this word the Being of beings" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 78).

Heidegger understands that instead of our current reduction of language to its purpose of expression, language had an alternative role to play. Language has come to be equivocated with "expression" from its initial correlation with vocalization, as in the Greek "φωνή, as sound and voice, hence phonetically" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 77). Heidegger notes, "the Greek word that corresponds to our word 'language' is γλώσσα, 'tongue'" (ibid). And that "Language is φωνή σημαντική, a vocalization which signifies something" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 77).

In our age, language is reduced to expression to such an extent that it is no longer distinguishable from expression. The suggestion is "that language attains at the outset that preponderant character which we designate with the name 'expression'" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 77). Heidegger states very clearly that presently "Language is taken to be expression, and vice versa." And the antithesis is equally true that "every kind of expression is represented as a kind of language" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 77).

However, remarkably the interchangeability of the expression and language does not extend to the point of being able to equate every kind of language as a kind of expression. What is understandable therein is that there still

remains the possibility for other roles for language to play beyond the scope of expression. If we consider the early Greek concept of *logos*, then we can begin to realize another role for language beyond the role of expression.

First we must qualify the forthcoming position in the jargon and debate of our age. William Andrew Myer's essay, "Heraclitus' Logos as a Paradigm of the Human Universal," addresses Heraclitus' thought with the conclusion that it can be taken as an early model for thinking as a realist. He places Heraclitus on the realist side of the modern realist/anti-realist debate. Via an exegesis of Heraclitus fragments 1, 2, and 50 on *logos*, Myer compiles the term, *logos,* in its dualistic ability to transcend authorship through participation in a collective construct. Fragment 50 has been previously considered at the onset of this section and began "listening not to me." Fragments 1 is as follows:

> Men should try to comprehend the underlying coherence of things:
>
> it is expressed in the Logos, the formula or element of arrangement
>
> common to all things.
>
> (Kirk and Raven, 186).

And fragment 2 follows:

> Therefore it is necessary to follow the common; but although the
>
> Logos is common the many live as though they had a private
>
> understanding.
>
> (Kirk and Raven, 187).

Myer distinguishes the Transcendence Theory of *logos* in which the term refers to a separate principle or law outside of an individual's perspective on the term. He further differentiates the Discourse Theory, which contrary to Transcendence Theory, binds the meaning of *logos* solely to the words of a single philosopher, Heraclitus (164). There is a third option which marries the two, the Dual-Signification Theory in which "the word '*logos*' thus means Heraclitus' statement and simultaneously the truth it represents, which is independent of individual expressions of it" (164). Myer recounts the transcended understanding of the objectivity of the *logos,* where the *logos* is able to remain independent from the individual human statements or opinions surrounding it (165).

However, we have to qualify Heraclitus' notion of "objectivity" in that the *logos* cannot be said to be independent of a collective aspect ingrained in the agents that ignorantly express it. The "objectivity" of *logos* is defined by a collective reception that is available to its agents. In this sense, *logos* is not "objective" on its own, but rather "objective" in our collective ability to understand it.

Kirk and Raven offer clarifications that place the original insight of Heraclitus' fragments on *logos* in the camp of Myer's Dual Signification Theory. According to Kirk and Raven, Heraclitus did indeed "regard himself as having access to, and trying vainly to propagate, an all-important truth about the

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constitution of the world of which men are a part" (187). While at the same time this truth was "common," to all, as in Fragment 2 in that it was "both valid for all things and accessible to all men, if only they use their observation and their understanding and do not fabricate a private and deceptive intelligence" of *logos* (187).

Kirk and Raven specifically declare that Heraclitus' audience ought to have recognized "the Logos, which is perhaps to be interpreted as the unifying formula or proportionate method of arrangement of things, what might almost be termed their structural plan both individual and in sum" (187). To a classic Greek audience the general sense of the term λόγος would have been "measure, reckoning, or proportion" and cannot be reserved solely to Heraclitus' version as "account" (187). It should be clarified that Heraclitus clearly made a play on the general sense of λόγος for his audience the Greek reader, while at the same time exposing a more spectacular program for the term.

Furthermore Kirk and Raven note how at times Heraclitus conceived of the *logos* "as an actual component of things, and in many respects it is co-extensive with the primary cosmic constituent, fire" (188).   The link between Heraclitus' understanding of *logos* and that of fire follow from his cosmological dedication to fire. Kirk and Raven establish how for Heraclitus, "Fire" like his *logos* represented "the rule of measure in change which inheres the world process" (199).

For Heraclitus, fire was "the archetypal form of matter" representing the "world-order as a whole," in that "measures are being extinguished, corresponding measures being rekindled" (198). This "pure cosmic fire was probably identified by Heraclitus with αιθ´ήρ (aither), the brilliant fiery stuff which fills the shining sky and surrounds the world; this aither was widely regarded both as divine and as a place of souls" (198). Furthermore Heraclitus' fire was of "the purest and brightest sort, that is, as of the aitherial and divine thunderbolt" which has "a directive capacity" (199). Hence Heraclitus' fragment 64, "Thunderbolt steers all things" so famously placed above the door to Heidegger's cabin in the Dark Forest. The *logos* is an expression of this fire, which is both the physical and representational measure of change in the world. We can speculate that Heidegger likely felt a kinship and inspiration from the power of change expressed in the "Thunderbolt" of fragment 64 when taking seclusive time to write in his cabin.

I will now turn to address an alternative role for language and its distinction in the Heraclitus fragments on logos. The possibility of an alternative role for language is overshadowed by the modern separation of language from the problematic itself. In Heidegger's essay, "Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)", he states,

> We see this lightning only when we station ourselves in the storm
> of Being. Yet everything today betrays the fact that we bestir
> ourselves only to drive storms away. We organize all available

means for cloud seeding and storm dispersal in order to have calm in the face of the storm. But this calm is no tranquility. It is only anesthesia; more precisely, the narcotization of anxiety in the face of thinking.

<div align="right">(Early Greek Thinking, 78)</div>

How do we address the anesthetizing of our age, in order to create a relationship to the problematic that is able to yield a more authentic thinking, and therein create a basis for ancient language to speak? Heidegger tells us, "The world of thinking rest in the sobering quality of what it says. Just the same, thinking changes the world. It changes it in the ever darker depths of a riddle, depths which as they grow darker offer promise of a greater brightness" (Early Greek Thinking, 78). To grow darker in the riddle of our being may seem counterproductive to our standard of considering only the resolutions to our cognitive puzzles, and yet Heidegger is alluding to a mechanics that put our being before an ever darkening depth, thus making us more authentic. The task of thinking has been reduced to the solidification of answers, where our being is predicated on not attaining the comforts of an answer.

In Heidegger's consideration of Heraclitus Fragments B50 and B43, he underscores the role of our presumptions as misguided answers to the question of our being. He merges the fragments in summary saying:

Before you play with fire, whether it be to kindle or extinguish it,

put out first the flames of presumption, which overestimates itself

and takes poor measure because it forgets the essence of Λέγειν.

<div align="right">(Early Greek Thinking, 76).</div>

Heidegger is forthcoming with the project of translating Heraclitus in a manner which activates language toward thinking, when he reminds readers that "the translation of Λέγειν as gathered-letting–lie-before, and of Λόγος as the Laying that gathers, may seem strange" and yet "it is more salutary for thinking to wander into the strange than to establish itself in the obvious" (Early Greek Thinking, 76). Heidegger establishes ὁ Λόγος (die lesende Lege) as that "which gathers all present beings into presencing and lets them lie before us in it," or put simply the Laying that gathers (Early Greek Thinking, 66). He further posits that ὁ Λόγος "names that in which the presencing of what is comes to pass" (Early Greek Thinking, 76). According to Heidegger the Greeks had called the "presencing of present beings" τό ἐόν, we would say "the Being of beings" (Early Greek Thinking, 76). Letting the problematic lay before us in its complexity of character, may not offer us a solution, but it does offer an essential characteristic of ourselves in the face of that which we find taxing.

The logos serves as the mechanism that gathers all things before us, our role is to ready ourselves in the proper mindframe with which to receive what has been prepared for us as the logos. In Heidegger's essay "Logos Heraclitus, Fragment B 50," he states on hearing: "we do not hear because we have ears. We have ears, i.e. our bodies are equipped with ears, because we hear" (Early Greek

Thinking, 65). Not that the organ has purpose, in and of itself, but that we have an

ontological purpose for the organ. We are to understand ourselves as standing

before a world that has constructed us for understanding. We are equipped to

understand; yet we all too often ignore the call to hearken to our environment.

Heidegger states that "mortals hear the thunder of the heavens, the rustling of

woods, the gurgling of fountains, the ringing of plucked strings, the rumbling of

motors, the noises of the city-only and only so far as they always already in some

way belong to them and yet do not belong to them" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 66).

The success of hearing is measured by the fact that "we have heard [*gehört*] when

we *belong to* [*gehören*] the matter addressed" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 66).   The

difference is between merely 'hearing,' as in listening without consideration as to

what we are, and 'harkening' which asks us to recognize our being in relation to

what is said. In this regard we become aligned with what is said to such a degree

that we become an inherent part of what is said.

Returning to Heidegger's explanation of *logos* in Heraclitus Fragment B

50 and juxtaposing with the insight of Fragment B43, we can complete the picture

of Heidegger's' alignment of 'that which is said' with the environment within

which it is said. Heidegger explains:

> The speaking of the matter addressed is Λέγειν, letting-lie-together-before.
> It establishes this as itself. It lays one and the Same in one. It lays one as
> the Same. Such Λέγειν lays one and the same, the ὁμόν. Such Λέγειν is
> ὁμολογείν: One as the Same, i.e. a letting-lie-before of what does lie
> before us, gathered in the selfsameness of its lying-before." [Sic]

Here, as in the hearing example given above, the *logos* serves as an example that is established only when it is attentively received by the many. In this sense the single individual's understanding of the *logos* cannot be understood as independent from the totality within with which it is the Same. The function of the *logos* is to let the matter lie-together with the Same, or have the matter return to its selfsame recognition.

In the discussion at the opening of this section, we considered the position of Heraclitus in the modern setting of Myers Dual Signification Theory; we can now further clarify the contradiction of having an "objective" understanding via its collective reception. The seemingly contradictory understanding of Heraclitus does follow if we consider how a matter under consideration necessarily speaks through the collective *logos*. The *logos* makes it the same as that which is being spoken about.

According to Siedel, Heidegger notes the correlation between the division of the Greek *physis* and *logos* with that of the historic transition of ontology into Platonic and Aristotelian thought. This division was both inevitable and lasting until its culmination in the Nihilism of Nietzsche. Truth was only a possibility before the mutual correlation between the two ideas had degenerated.   This is due to the displacement of *logos*, as the holding place for nature *physis,* and it's

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abstraction into the form of the object of the idea. The original sense of the *logos* was that of a collection (*Sammlung*), it was a dwelling place for Being (Seidel 44). However, in its derived form, language comes to mean only the object of the idea, it is understood only as correctness in correlation with the idea it is understood to represent.

In Being and Time, Heidegger pursued the grounds of phenomenology through an analysis of "the Greek word φαινόμενον (the open, the self-showing) and the λόγος as that which allows something to be seen (*lässt etwas sehen*)" (Seidel 8). The elucidative power of the *logos* was explained, at this stage in Heidegger's career as via the expression *Sehenlassen*, 'the letting something show itself.' Later in Heidegger's career (1951) logos was noted as a "Letting-lie-before-all-together" (*beisammen-vorliegen-Lassen).* Heidegger constructed this complete picture of the term from earlier university of Freiburg lectures (1944) and 'the Logos' from *Being and Time* (1927) (Seidel 8). Throughout his works the term Logos remained a central idea summarized as "something which lies before us as the self-showing thing that it is" (Seidel 9).

Heidegger tells us that the explicit character of "the Being of Man," "the ordinary and also the philosophical 'definition' of 'Dasein' is "delineated as *zōon logon echon*, that creature whose Being is essentially determined by its being able to speak." (*Being and Time* from, *Basic Writings,* 70). The continued "development of the ontological guideline itself, i.e. of the 'hermeneutics' of the

logos" is reflective of the *Legein,* or that which determines the structures of Being

that we encounter in the process of discourse. The *Legein*, Heidegger tells us, is

the *noein.* "the simple apprehension of something at hand in this pure being at

hand [Vorhandenheit]" (ibid). "Dialectic," however, is a failed attempt, or a

"philosophic embarrassment" as Heidegger puts it, due to its superfluousness and

inability to make present being at hand (ibid).

CHAPTER 5

CULMINATION IN TECHNOLOGY

Occidental cultures' genuine disregard for creating a place for safeguarding (gathering) the ancient state of being is culminated in the mindset behind the technology of our time. If we return to what was addressed in Heidegger's notion of authentic history from Being and Time —i.e., that earlier insights came to be the "conceptual character" of the modern age's "metaphysics"—we can further extend this problem to our own age of technological development.

It is Heidegger's summation, as early as 1944, that "through technology the entire globe is today embraced and held fast in a kind of Being experienced in Western fashion and represented on the epistemological models of European metaphysics and science" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 76). Furthermore, according to Heidegger, "if we think of this historic development in a truly historical way, then that in which the beginning of Western thought rests first becomes manifest: that in Greek antiquity the Being of beings becomes worthy of thought is the beginning of the West and is the hidden source of its destiny" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 76). This destiny has become governed in "the essence of modern technology" due to the beginning of the West not having "safeguarded what has been—i.e., the gathering of what still endures" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 76).

The forgetting of Λόγος, as 'the Laying that gathers' that Heraclitus presented to us, is marked by Heidegger as having been the operative mode of subsequent thinking. What was forgotten is how for Heraclitus "the Being (presencing) of beings appears as ὁ Λόγος, as the Laying that gathers" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 76). Outside of the role of representation that modernity has assigned to language, it has a hidden potential that falls in line with the conception of Λόγος, as the Laying that gathers.

However, Heidegger is clear in saying that the Greeks, Heraclitus included, "never think the essence of language expressly as the Λόγος, as the Laying that gathers," and he further declares, "nowhere do we find a trace of the Greeks' having thought the essence of language directly from the essence of Being" (77). Heraclitus then only alluded to the insight that was available and brought to the fore in Heidegger's writings. Furthermore there is an open potential for aligning the essence of language directly with the essence of Being in the works of our age that have been uninitiated due to the false trajectory of the technological framework.

CHAPTER 6

HERACLITUS TEXT ISSUES AND

THE SOLUTIONS HEIDEGGER PROVIDES

> The 2,500 years that separate us from Heraclitus are a
> perilous affair. With our explication of Heraclitus' fragments, it
> requires the most intense self-criticism in order to see something
> here. On the other hand, it also requires a venture. One must risk
> something, because otherwise one has nothing in hand. So there is
> no objection to a speculative interpretation. We must therefore
> presuppose that we can only have a presentiment of Heraclitus,
> when we ourselves think. Yet, it is a question whether we still can
> measure up to this task.
> (Heidegger, *Heraclitus Seminar*, 36).

The label of "the obscure," given to Heraclitus in his time and so often

noted by contemporary scholars, is further exemplified by the problematic nature

of understanding the original texts we have of Heraclitus. Because Heraclitus'

texts are timeworn and available to us only in fragments, numerous interpretive

problems come about as a result of dealing with the content of the texts. The

creation of a complete picture of Heraclitus' philosophy is therefore, for better

and worse, always qualified by the fragmentary nature of texts. In any

interpretation "Heraclitus' philosophy" will be an interesting play of content,

form, and the biases of interpreters throughout the ages.

All too often, a few lines or even words of Heraclitus' will have been

quoted in a later thinkers' writing, and be taken for the entirety of the

philosophers' mindset. For example, Kirk and Raven note how the Stoics adopted

Heraclitus accounts as guidelines for their own philosophies. Apparently they

went so far as to "radically readapt" Heraclitus' views such as "*epyrosis,* the

periodical consummation of the whole world by fire" to a vision of eschatology

by Heraclitus (Kirk and Raven, 185). According to Kirk and Raven, Heraclitus

never subscribed to the cosmogony of fire and he didn't even permit the rigidity

of eschatology into his worldview (Ibid).

Nietzsche, in his Pre-Plotonic Philosophers, discusses destruction via fire

as it pertains to Heraclitus saying that "Heraclitus internalized Anaximander's

perception that the earth dries out: a destruction [Untergang] by fire awaits" (72).

Nietzsche underscores how this cosmic destruction amounts to a form of play

(παιδιά) in which "from time to time he (the cosmic child) has his fill

[Übersätitgung] of it-nothing other than fire exists there; that is, it engulfs all

things" (72). This cosmic destruction is then answered by a counterplay of

purpose and order, which re-establishes the principal of justice.

So rather than a destruction by fire from the universal designer,

Nietzsche's reading understands that "there is not necessity, qua human being,

that he must acknowledge the Logos" (74).   Nietzsche praises Heraclitus'

philosophy while iterating the role to the Logos in a cosmic game of play. He

posits that while the role of the Logos is more over "an eternal universal law," the

role of the individual is outside the scope of the divine law of logos (74).

Nietzsche, in stating that "justice should not punish: it is itself imminent lawfulness, which demonstrates itself just as much among fools as among the highest human beings," illustrates the lack of importance regarding human involvement in the Logos (74). Recalling the earlier discussion of Heidegger's understanding of *logos* as a "Letting-lie-before-all-together" (*beisammen-vorliegen-Lassen)*, the question of human involvement is answered by our call to be present before that which is unfolding.

Heidegger's efforts regarding Heraclitus' fragments will prove an exception to the tradition of using the fragments to support personal biases. Uniquely Heidegger's methodology never seeks to attain the *verbatim* as such in Heraclitus' thought. He qualifies his own methodology by maintaining a focus on the difficulty involved in the insights he attains from his source material. Once he curiously remarked, "in my opinion, the distress of the whole Heraclitus interpretation is to be seen in the fact that what we call fragments are not fragments, but citations from a text in which they do not belong" (*Heraclitus Seminar*, 150). He is indicating that the words of Heraclitus do not physically belong to the later thinkers' books that have preserved them, and furthermore that the content of the fragmentary thoughts of Heraclitus are still an asset to the modern reader in their ability to overcome the circumstances of their preservation in other writers' texts.

Later thinkers' agendas and specific contexts often differed and were outside the scope of the original Heraclitus fragments, both in terms of theme and time period. Initially, we may resist the given fragmentary format of the texts and inquiry of the seemingly lost 'original' sense of the texts. A typical inquiry could proceed along the lines: Given the format of the primary material scholars have to work with, how can we know if our interpretation is being guided correctly in the direction of the author's intention? Readers ought to be cautious. In undertaking our interpretation are we doing the text justice, in the sense of creating cohesion with its authorial intention? In this vein we have to wonder whether the author's intention even matters, especially when dealing with fragmentary texts from the 6th century B.C.

However this is a misguided approach from the outset in that it avoids dealing with the content of texts. Even as fragments they ask us to abandon the idea of individual cohesion of thought. Our section on *logos* addressed the importance of gathering our Being into the selfsame character of the text via the *logos*, through a language that is of the essence of our Being. The language that is of the essence of our Being has the same character as the fragments.

There will admittedly be and always has been difficulty in creating cohesion for the material of Heraclitus. Kirk and Raven note how even Aristotle, who had access to the full content of the texts, noted the difficulty of attaining cohesion within Heraclitus in that he "did not use the categories of formal logic,

and tended to describe the same thing (or roughly the same thing) now as a god, now as a form of matter, now as a rule of behavior or principle which was nevertheless a physical constituent of things" (*The Presocratic Philosophers*, 186).

The task of understanding Heraclitus' lack of cohesion asks the reader to put aside the goal of creating cohesion and consider the value of the fragmentary form, as Heidegger does, as an alternative to the project of the 'categories of formal logic.' We have to accept that Heraclitus' philosophy was constructed with a purposeful ignorance of the 'categories of formal logic,' either due to its pre-Aristotelian construction or a willful ignorance of the importance of logic. Any insight that we may attain from the philosopher will ask us to reach beyond the assumptions and assurances that have been created from post-Heraclitean thinking. Heidegger's project makes consideration of the texts in such a way that the fragmentary nature of the texts works as an acceptable form for the content they represent.

In practice, as William Richardson notes on Heidegger's exposition of Heraclitean Λόγος, Heidegger "does not claim to be saying what Heraclitus said, but rather what he did not say" (500). The full implication of Heidegger's address of 'what goes unsaid' will be discussed in further detail in the section, "Aletheia." Our discussion thus far addressed the necessity to always let the text lie before us as observers and yet remain ever vigilant of the totality of its presentation.

Ultimately, we have to accept that, in our efforts to understand Heraclitus and Heidegger's insights, there will always remain, what John Sallis notes as "unbridgeable gaps, unanswerable questions, [and] unjustified leaps" within Heraclitus' writings (*Heraclitean Fragments,* ix).

This lack of accessibility is present in a twofold sense, the fragmentary nature of the historic relics, and the very obscure content of Heraclitus' philosophy. When exploring the unique aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus we must be mindful of avoiding and seeking vindication of the discussion that Heidegger raises. Rather we can focus our efforts on the content of Heidegger's interpretations in the scope and breadth of the historic interpretation itself.

It should be noted that this effort isn't intended to avoid dealing with the historic aspects of the material. In many senses the approach is more in tune to the original experience of confusion entwined in the historic Heraclitus texts. We have to agree with John Sallis' statement that "Heidegger's translations are thus not intended as contribution to philology; rather, they are rooted in a thoughtful experience of the tradition and the dialogue belonging to that experience" (3). Richardson provides an important qualification that, justification of Heidegger's reading, "does not matter very much as far as we are concerned" (485). To grapple with the material is to come to terms not with the validity of its form but rather with its content. There is still room to wonder if Heidegger is in line with

the content of Heraclitus' fragments. Does Heidegger do justice to the philosophy of Heraclitus?

At one point in his exegesis of Heraclitus' Fragment B 16, Heidegger questions whether Heraclitus intended his fragment to be interpreted as Heidegger's essay, "Aletheia (Heraclius, Fragment B16)", had entailed (*Early Greek Thinking*, 120). Specifically Heidegger asks: "Was what this discussion has said within the range of his (Heraclitus') notions? Who knows? Who can say?" (ibid). His response is curious in that it reveals the value he places upon attaining accuracy in the interpretive process. He continues, "But perhaps the fragment, independently of Heraclitus' own representational range, says the sort of thing our tentative discussion put forward. The fragment does say it—provided a thoughtful dialogue may bring it to speak" (ibid). In this response, Heidegger tells us that it is the subsequent 'dialogue' about a text, which brings the text to speak.

Heidegger is insightfully alluding to the fact that the full detail and spectrum of the original "representational range" of Heraclitus is captured in the interpretive efforts that follow the text. Accuracy in regard to interpretation is in the process of engaging the text. Therefore the text, as seemingly obscure and lacking in logical cohesion as it is, says something only when it is engaged in a process of interpretation. In this regard the content of Heraclitean fragment B 16

can speak outside of its authorial intention via a dialectical process beyond the historic context.

A poignant illustration of the difference and originality between Heidegger's approach to Heraclitus and that of his contemporaries is reflected in the Winter Semester 1966/67 Seminar on Heraclitus held at the University of Freiburg with his associate Eugen Fink. The seminar devoted itself to detailed readings of the Heraclitus fragments. John Sallis, editor of the <u>Heraclitus Seminar 1966/67</u>, summarized that in Heidegger's turning toward the early Greeks, especially Heraclitus, he asking the question, "Why do the Greeks remain an issue for thinking today?" (Sallis X). Sallis recognizes that in the early Greeks, "the unthought may lie nearer what is thought than in any subsequent thinking" (ibid). Sallis notes that in Heraclitus' "saying there is perhaps a primary imaging of this nearness of unthought and thought" (ibid). Furthermore "in what those sayings make manifest, thoughtful dialogue needs, then, to seek the measure of that distance" (ibid).

Turning back to value of the dialogue Heidegger places upon his "tentative discussion" of Heraclitus' Fragment B 16, we find a valid model with which to interpret historic texts. In order to develop the mechanics behind a fragment's ability to create dialogue beyond its own history we must look in detail at Heraclitus fragment B 16 and Heidegger's essay responding to the fragment.

CHAPTER 7

On Aletheia

[What birds plunge through is not the intimate space]

What birds plunge through is not the intimate space
in which you see all forms intensified.
(Out in the Open, you would be denied
your self, would disappear into that vastness.) [sic]

Space reaches from us and construes the world:
to know a tree, in its true element,
throw inner space around it, from that pure
abundance in you. Surround it with restraint.
It has no limits. Not till it is held
in your renouncing is it truly there.

(Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, Uncollected Poems, 263).

Heidegger's essay, entitled "Αλήθεια," that was to become the "Aletheia (Heraclius, Fragment B16)" essay from Early Greek Thinking, was first presented as a lecture course on Heraclitus in the summer semester of 1943. Heidegger's address of Heraclitus' fragment 16 represents a break from the traditional understanding of truth as the correctness between a thought and the environment surrounding it. In the typical understanding of something as true we assert a hypothesis and test it against the surrounding environment in order to see the world as a match to our expectations.

According to Daniel O. Dahlstrom in his essay, "Truth as Alētheia and the Clearing of Beyng," Heidegger emphasizes the enormity of the human

transformation at the beginning of Western thinking, initiated by the Greek

understanding of *alētheia* as the unhiddenness of beings" (117). Unlike the model

of truth as the correctness of assertions, the model of truth as *alētheia* has

applicability beyond the sense of truth as correctness.

The Greek on fragment 16 is:

τό μή δύνόν ποτε πώς ὸν τις λόθοι;

in Diels-Kranz translation:

"How can one hide himself before that which never sets?"[i]

In discussing *alētheia*, the word is typically translated as "truth," although

Heidegger emphasized a unique definition of the term.   Accordingly the

understanding of the term as mere "truth" has limited the potential of the concept

of *alētheia* to the narrow meaning of "correctness." According to Dahlstrom, it

was a common event in the time of Homer to posit *alētheia* as "a cognate of

correctness," in which "the correctness (*orthotēs)* of a thought or assertion tends

to be understood in terms of its agreement or correspondence *(homoiōsis*) with a

state of affairs" (Dahlstrom, 116). However a much more remarkable sense of

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[i] As noted by David Farrell Krell's introduction to *Early Greek Thinking*
G.S. Kirk and J.S. Raven do not print a translation of Heraclitus B 16, p.6.

alētheia was initiated in the Greek mindset when they saw truth as the unhiddeness of beings.

Heidegger takes up the Greek notion and sees *alētheia* as "unhiddeness" (*Unverborgenheit)*. Furthermore "the hiddenness or absence of (lēthē) entailed by *alētheia* is the hiddenness not simply of this or that particular entity but entities as a whole" (Dahlstrom, 123). Truth is not defined in subjectivity and objectivity as in the correctness model; it must entail an understanding that transpires in an entirety before objectivity and subjectivity are considered. Heidegger asks, "why is it that we stubbornly resist considering even once whether the belonging-together of subject and object does not arise from something that first imparts their nature to both the object and its objectivity, and the subject and its subjectivity, and hence is prior to the realm of their reciprocity?" (103).

Heidegger pauses in the initial part of the essay to say, "we know too much and believe too readily ever to feel at home in a questioning which is powerfully experienced" (Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 104). If we are to be successful in seeking an understanding that takes place beyond the constructs of subjectivity and objectivity, "we need the ability to wonder and take up that wonder as our abode?" (ibid). Unhiddeness, in its requirement for an observer, isn't fully accounted for by the understanding of alētheia as the "cognate of correctness." Missing are the details regarding the role the recipient of truth is to play.

Further in this regard, Dahlstrom explains, "what is hidden is hidden *from* someone (or all of us), truth as the unhiddenness of 'things' also entails their actual or potential presence to someone, someone with an understanding of them" (116). Therefore we have a correlation to the earlier explored notion of having ears for a world that has designed us for the capacity to hear it, or a capacity for understanding the truth due to the unhiddenness within the world itself.

If we follow Heidegger's trajectory in understanding alētheia as the "un-hiddenness" we can go one step further, as he does, and make note of a hiddenness or absence (lēthē) that is implicated. Dahlstrom explains that hiddenness is "not traceable simply to either the obstruction of some entities by others or the shortsightedness of some observers," nor does it entail "merely the absence in the past out of which the presence of what is present emerges" (116-17).

Dahlstrom clarifies that "'Being' (*Sein*) signifies the sense in which particular beings (*Seindes*) are understood to be, 'beyng' (*seyn*) refers to the event (*Ereignis*) in which that signification and understanding historically take hold-even if only to be forgotten or treated with indifference" (120). And furthermore in his response to Heraclitus fragment16, Heidegger "projects the need for a new beginning, a transformation that corresponds to the "truth of beyng," the clearing presupposed by truth as *alētheia* (unhiddeness)" (117).

In his reading of Heraclitus, Heidegger rather understands that the "truth of beyng" is "the interplay of that hiddenness and unhiddeness (or, equivalently, absencing and presencing, the strife between earth and world) [sic Dahstrom's brackets] (117). The truth of beyng lies in "the midst of beings that grounds their unhiddenness and, thereby the correctness of assertions and thoughts about them" (117).

If we follow Heidegger further we come to his understanding of "the clearing (*Lichtung*)," the open space in which the truth of beyng is revealed in relation to unconcealment. The clearing allows for the possibility of truth as *alētheia* because the possibilities of beyng's self-concealment exist in the unhiddenness of things. The unhiddenness is a space in which the possibilities of beyng's self-concealment become a possibility for it.

As Dahlstrom puts it, "Heidegger accordingly observes that truth in the primordial and essential sense is the truth of beyng and the truth of beyng is not the clearing simply but the clearing for the self-concealing of beyng" (120). Our specific role is then to act as "guardians of the openness for beyng's self-concealment" (122).

As "guardians of the openness for beyng's self-concealment," we are present at the historic event of aletheia when it occurs within the clearing.

Sheltering

Our role is further clarified if we invite the earlier discussion of the *logos* as a gathering letting-lie-together-before into the discussion.

Heidegger asks, "do we wander off the path if we think Λόγος as Λέγειν *prior* to all profound metaphysical interpretations, thereby thinking to establish seriously that Λέγειν, as gathering letting-lie-together-before, can be nothing other than the essence of unification, which assembles everything in the totality of simple presencing?" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 70). According to Heidegger, "the laying that gathers has, as Λόγος, laid down everything present in unconcealment" (*Early Greek Thinking*, 70). The connection between *aletheia* and *logos* is made clear in the fact that the *logos* lays down what is present in truth as unconcealment.

Lastly a connection between *aletheia* and *logos* is found in the understanding that the *logos* discloses what is present in a state of unconcealment. Here the two concepts are able to merge as the same in the sense that they are both working toward disclosure:

> To lay is to shelter. Laying shelters everything present in its presencing, from which whatever lingers a while in presence can be appropriately collected and brought forward by mortal Λέγειν. Λόγος lays that which is present before and down into presencing, that is, it puts those things back. Presencing nevertheless suggests: *having come forward to endure in unconcealment.* Because the Λόγος lets lie before us what lies before us as such, it discloses what is present in its presencing. But disclosure is Ἀλήθεια. This and Λόγος are the same.
> (*Early Greek Thinking*, 70)

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

If we consider the key ideas addressed in each section of this thesis- the

ancient possibility of an alternative return to questioning that finds its legs in

Being's relation to the present, the necessity to include the unknown in the

schema of the understanding which has been dominated by occidental

"metaphysics" and the thrust toward the rational acquisition of answers, the

individual subjective nature of understanding and the possibility of attaining an

objective understanding through the collective reception of the external *logos*, the

value added to the content of a fragmentary text when it is juxtaposed with its

fragmentary form, Aletheia as the unhiddenness which needs the clearing in which

we may be guardians of the unknown in Beyng, as representative of only a narrow

portion of the study Martin Heidegger provided in response to the ancient Greeks,

we are left with a grand respect for "what goes unsaid," and what must go unsaid.

We have however in the areas that I have touched upon a point of criticism

to come to terms with. In the predominant philosophic trajectory of occidental

"metaphysics," which has culminated in the technological age, we have stayed in

a narrow scope of definition and determination that reduces our possibility of

truth to a correlation of correctness between the concept and the idea. We have

failed to consider as the ancient Greek understanding that was once available to

us. From this course of misguided "metaphysics" we have lost the true value of

the ancient storm, which drove us into the unknown determiner of an authentic existence for ourselves. We have lost sight of determining Being in the proximity to the abysmal depth of the unanswerable riddle of its own finitude.

In regard to the text itself, we must accept the fragment form if the text in its ability to create a significant dialogues that speaks to the depths of Being. We must overcome our need to make sense of a text via a language that asks us to equate the idea to the concept, and renew for ourselves a language that expands the breadth of thought and Being.

If we look to a language which breaks down the dichotomy of corresponding the idea to the concept and brings us toward the universality of truth through the *logos* in our collective ability to let it lie before us in its unconcealed nature, than the truth can be impacted by the simple relation of Being to the present. When undertaking the analysis of ancient texts we can approach the task with the understanding that a universal principal is at work in the loss of our identity amongst our temporality. The ideas of Heraclitus that speak of Being, understanding, and truth as disclosure are still present amongst the backdrop of the unknown in our lives.

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Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts.* Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Myers, William Andrew. "Heraclitus' Logos as a Paradigm of the Human Universal." *Mythos and Logos: How to Regain the Love of Wisdom*, eds. Anderson, Albert A., Steven V. Hicks, and Lech Witkowski, 163-173. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004.

APPENDIX

A. Annotated Bibliography

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Heidegger's Ways*. Albany: State University of New York
    Press, 1994.

    Gadamer's book served as the modern exemplary authority of the state of
Heideggerean thought and a voice for the influences of the Presocratics upon
Heidegger. Particularly, Gadamer's clarification of the Greek notion of 'self-
consciousness,' or lack of, and the placement of the self in the context of
historical understanding.

Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings*. ed. David Farrell Krell. San Francisco:
    HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

    Absolutely indispensable to any discussion of Heidegger, this text is the
primary source for his magnum opus, *Being and Time*. Additionally, I looked at
the essay, *The Way of Language,* in order to clarify Heidegger's position on
Heraclitus' concept of *logos*, at the foremost point in his career.

Heidegger, Martin. *Early Greek Thinking*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.

    A seminal work for much of Heidegger's later works and modern critical
understandings, I used two of the essays contained in this text in order to
understand Heidegger's original position on the Presocratics. Although the other
two essays, *Moria (Paramenides VII 34-41)* and *The Anaximander Fragment,* no
doubt played into the interpretation approach of the totality of the thesis. I chose
to explore the interpretations Heidegger provided on *logos* and *aletheia* in the
Heraclitus Fragments with a critical respect toward interpretation and language,
which the Heraclitean essays address.

Jacobs, David C. *The Presocratics After Heidegger.* Albany [u.a.]: State Univ. of
New York Press, 1999.

This text served as a critical companion text to the explorations that I
pursued in Heidegger's, *Early Greek Thinking.* The book contains a multitude of
indispensable essays on Heidegger's relationship to the Presocratics. From Jean-
François Courtine's *The Destruction of Logic: From Logos to language* to *What
We Didn't See* by Dennis J. Schmidt, this book shows the connection between
Heraclitus' philosophy of *logos* and the character of Heraclitus as the obscure.

Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A
Critical History with a Selection of Texts.* Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]:
Cambridge University Press, 1983.

This is the best primary source for all Presocratic philosophy. Kirk and
Raven provided both the original Greek texts and the source information about the
texts. Not to mention they provided several very good essays on the available
philological aspects of Presocratic fragmentary texts, biographical information for
the ancient thinkers, and other essays on themes found in the Ancient
philosophers such as cosmogony of fire and logos.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks.*
Chicago: Regnery, 1962.

This work and *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* are the best primary sources
on Nietzsche and the Presocratics. I used them to gain a sense of the innovation
of the German consciousness by the early Greeks, and to bounce the ideas of
Nietzsche on Heraclitus to those of Heidegger.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Greg Whitlock. *The Pre-Platonic*
Philosophers. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

This is a primary source of Nietzsche's on Early Greek philosophy and it
primarily served as a clarification of Nietzsche's position on early Greeks as
expressed in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*.

Schmidt, Dennis J. "What We Didn't See*." The Presocratics After Heidegger*,
ed. Jacobs, David C., 153-169. Albany [u.a.]: State Univ. of New York
Press, 1999.

This essay is a developed model for connecting Heideggerean thought
with that of the Presocratics. Schmidt illustrates Heidegger's development of a
"non-metaphysical sense of ethicality," a framework which he credits to
Heidegger's readings of early Greek texts. I used the style of Schmidt's work as a
model pursing similar pathways Heidegger made available in the way of language
and understanding.